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TAGS: PGOV PINR KDEM HO

SUBJECT: TFH01: ZELAYA APPOINTED HEAD OF ANTHROPOLOGY
INSTITUTE REFUSES TO BE FIRED

Classified By: Ambassador Hugo Llorens, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: Dr. Dario Euraque, the general manager of the Honduran Institute of Anthropology and History (IHAH), was dismissed from his position on August 21 in what Euraque believes was a political move due to his appointment to the position under the Zelaya administration. Dr. Euraque is also a Legal Permanent Resident of the United States and Professor of History at Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut. He was appointed to the IHAH position by President Zelaya's Minister of Culture, Dr. Rodolfo Pastor Fasquelle; as he believes his dismissal was politically driven and illegal, he has stated his intention to ignore the removal. Dr. Euraque has very strong ties to the United States academic community; his dismissal is sure to procure a reaction. End Summary.

¶2. (C) On August 28, Poloff met Dr. Dario Euraque who explained that he was informed by letter on August 21 of his dismissal as general manager of the Honduran Institute of Anthropology and History (IHAH). The letter was signed by the de facto Minister of Culture, Myrna Aida Castro Rosales. On August 21, Dr. Euraque sent a response to Castro stating that he could not recognize his dismissal given the only legal way to remove a general manager of IHAH is by order of the board of directors. As of August 28, Euraque had not received a response and continued to function in his role as general manager.

¶3. (C) Euraque argues his dismissal was politically driven because his appointment by the IHAH board was supported by President Zelaya's Minister of Culture. Additionally, Euraque claims the move was in retaliation for public comments Euraque made on July 25 against de facto Minister of Culture Castro's decision to allow the Honduran Armed Forces to use the Old Presidential House as a recruitment center for reservists in the Honduran military. The Old Presidential House is a cultural heritage site which is protected under Honduran law and is under the administration of the IHAH.

¶4. (C) Euraque enjoys wide support among the employees of the IHAH. Since Euraque's dismissal, the IHAH employee union has held a one-day work stoppage and an assembly to demonstrate their support for Dr. Euraque. On August 27, IHAH employees and a group called "Artists Against the Coup" held a demonstration in favor of Dr. Euraque which forced the de facto Minister of Culture to move the site for a ceremony to inaugurate a new name for the Honduran National Archives. Euraque told Poloff that his employees reported being "roughed up" by police as they broke up the demonstration.

¶5. (C) Euraque stated that he believes his removal is also in direct response to the high amount of criticism and protest

from the scholarly and academic communities over the appointment of Castro as de facto Minister of Culture. Post received one inquiry from a professor in the United States who expressed concern over the removal of Euraque and indicated he already contacted his representatives in the U.S. Congress. Dr. Euraque also gave post a copy of a petition of support signed by over 350 professors and academics from around the world.

¶6. (C) During a meeting with Poloff on August 28, Euraque indicated his intention to ignore the de facto Minister of Culture's decision, adding he was willing to be arrested if necessary. He did request post's assistance to clarify whether a conviction for unlawful usurpation of a government position would have negative consequences for his current status as a Legal Permanent Resident or future application for U.S. citizenship.

¶7. (C) Comment: Dr. Euraque is an international scholar; he has expressed a moderate, though clearly anti-coup, stance in private conversations with Poloffs. His case will continue to draw attention based on the level of support he enjoys internationally and from his own employees. His removal is consistent with a worrisome pattern of replacement and firing of many Zelaya appointees by the de facto regime. What makes Dr. Euraque's case unusual and worth watching is his public stance against the removal and his commitment to stand up to what he characterizes as an unlawful removal by a de facto government. End Comment.

LLORENS